
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1070 (File 522, as amended by Senate “A” and “B”)*

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL NURSE ADVISORY COUNCIL.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE) commissioner to create a School Nurse Advisory Council. The council must advise the SDE and Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioners on matters affecting school nurses, including their professional development, staffing levels, and delivery of health care services. The bill requires the advisory council to annually report to the SDE and DPH commissioners and the Public Health and Education committees, with the first report due February 1, 2014.

The bill also establishes an advisory council on pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infections (PANDAS) and pediatric acute neuropsychiatric syndrome (PANS) (see BACKGROUND). This council must advise the DPH commissioner on research, diagnosis, treatment, and education relating to these conditions. Starting January 1, 2014, it must annually report to the Public Health Committee.

*Senate Amendment “A” (1) generally grants authority and responsibility concerning the school nurse advisory council to the SDE commissioner, rather than DPH commissioner; (2) increases the number of voting members on this council and makes other changes to its membership composition; (3) adds to the topics the council must include in its reports; and (4) makes other minor changes.

*Senate Amendment “B” adds the provisions on the PANDAS/PANS advisory council.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013 for the school nurse advisory council provisions; upon passage for the PANDAS/PANS advisory

council provisions.

SCHOOL NURSE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Membership

Under the bill, the school nurse advisory council's voting members are as follows (it appears they are appointed by the SDE commissioner):

1. One representative from each state-wide bargaining representative organization that represents school nurses;
2. one representative of the Association of School Nurses of Connecticut, employed at a private or parochial school;
3. one representative of the Connecticut Nurses Association;
4. one representative of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents;
5. one representative of the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators;
6. one representative of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education;
7. two school district medical advisors, including one member of the American Academy of Pediatrics; and
8. one representative of the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home who is a school nurse.

The DPH and SDE commissioners, or their designees, are ex-officio, nonvoting members and must attend the council's meetings.

Council members must elect a chairperson from among the members who are school nurses.

Procedure

The SDE commissioner must schedule the first council meeting, to be held no later than September 1, 2013. The council must meet upon

the call of the chairperson or upon the request of a majority of the members. A majority of the members constitutes a quorum, and a majority vote of a quorum is needed for any official council action.

The bill provides that council members are not paid for their service, except for reimbursement for necessary expenses incurred in performing their duties.

Reporting Requirement

Under the bill, the council must report by February 1, 2014 and at least annually thereafter to the SDE and DPH commissioners and the Public Health and Education committees. The report must include recommendations on (1) school nurses' professional development, staffing levels, and delivery of health care services and (2) protocols for emergency medication administration and evaluating temporary medical conditions that may be symptomatic of serious illnesses or injuries.

The bill requires the SDE commissioner to notify local and regional school boards of the advisory council's recommendations not later than 30 days after he receives these reports.

PANDAS/PANS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Membership

The bill requires the DPH commissioner, within 30 days after the bill's passage, to appoint the following voting members to the PANDAS/PANS advisory council:

1. an immunologist licensed and practicing in Connecticut with experience treating persons with PANDAS and PANS and the use of intravenous immunoglobulin;
2. a health care provider licensed and practicing in Connecticut with expertise in treating persons with PANDAS, PANS, and autism;
3. a representative of the Connecticut branch of the P.A.N.D.A.S. Resource Network;

4. an osteopathic physician licensed and practicing in Connecticut with experience treating persons with PANDAS and PANS;
5. a health care provider licensed and practicing in Connecticut with expertise in treating persons with Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses;
6. a medical researcher with experience conducting research on PANDAS, PANS, obsessive-compulsive disorder, tic disorder, and other neurological disorders;
7. a certified dietitian-nutritionist practicing in Connecticut who provides services to children with autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other neuro-developmental conditions;
8. a representative of a professional organization in Connecticut for school psychologists;
9. a child psychiatrist with experience treating persons with PANDAS and PANS;
10. a representative of a professional organization in Connecticut for school nurses;
11. a pediatrician with experience treating persons with PANDAS and PANS;
12. a representative of an organization focused on autism;
13. a parent with a child who has been diagnosed with PANDAS or PANS and autism; and
14. a social worker licensed and practicing in Connecticut.

Under the bill, there are three other voting members: (1) a representative of SDE's bureau of special education and (2) the Public Health Committee's chairpersons or their designees, who may be legislators. The DPH commissioner, or her designee, is an ex-officio, nonvoting member and must attend the council's meetings.

The council must elect a chairperson from among its members.

Procedure

Under the bill, the DPH commissioner must schedule the first council meeting, to be held no later than September 1, 2013. The council must meet upon the call of the chairperson or upon the request of a majority of the members. A majority of the members constitutes a quorum, and a majority vote of a quorum is needed for any official council action.

The bill provides that council members are not paid for their service, except for reimbursement for necessary expenses incurred in performing their duties.

Reporting Requirement

Under the bill, the PANDAS/PANS advisory council must annually report to the Public Health Committee, with the first report due January 1, 2014. The report must include recommendations on:

1. practice guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of PANDAS and PANS;
2. mechanisms to increase clinical awareness and education regarding these conditions among pediatricians and other physicians, school-based health centers, and providers of mental health services;
3. outreach to educators and parents to increase awareness of these conditions; and
4. developing a network of volunteer experts on the diagnosis and treatment of these conditions to assist in education and outreach.

BACKGROUND

PANDAS and PANS

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, PANDAS includes cases of children and adolescents with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) or tic disorders, whose symptoms worsen following

streptococcal infections. PANS includes all cases of children and adolescents with abrupt onset OCD, not just those associated with such infections.

Related Bills

sSB 360 (File 759), reported favorably by the Appropriations Committee, requires DPH to develop programs to educate the medical community and general public and promote research on PANDAS.

SB 956 (File 72), reported favorably by the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, requires (1) DPH to develop similar PANDAS programs as sSB 360 and (2) certain health insurance policies to cover the diagnosis and treatment of PANDAS.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 27 Nay 0 (04/02/2013)

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 28 Nay 1 (04/29/2013)

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 0 (05/21/2013)